

BOOK REVIEWS

Luta Anti-venérea. By César Anjo (Filho). 1948. Lisbon: Cosmos Library. Pp. 262. Price \$15.

This book on the organization of measures against venereal disease is intended primarily for the intelligent layman. The gravity of the present situation in Portugal is stressed, and individual prophylaxis and the organization of venereal disease clinics are discussed in detail. There is a careful study of prostitution, with an analysis of the factors which induce women to adopt this profession and men to frequent them. The author's views on the regulation of prostitution and on sex education are sensible and enlightened. S. S. B. G.

The Skin Diseases. By James Marshall, M.D., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. 1948. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd. Pp. 363 with 214 illustrations and 8 plates in colour. Price 30s. net.

This book is a companion to Dr. Marshall's manual, *The Venereal Diseases*. It is a superficial survey of diseases of the skin with ample illustrations. It contains little that is original, but it attempts to cover the rare as well as the common diseases; in doing so it gives inadequate detail of the diagnosis and treatment of conditions which form the major problem of dermatological practice.

Dr. Marshall believes that "dermatology could be built up on the sole basis of syphilis and its differential diagnosis." Consequently he allows fifty-seven pages for a description of all the stages of syphilis. Nobody would deny that a knowledge of syphilis is essential to the proper practice of dermatology, but his contention that it is the basis of dermatology is out-dated in the modern conception of the subject. Dermatology is the study of the largest organ in the body, and therefore a knowledge of general medicine is more relevant to the understanding and advancement of the subject. It is reasonable to assert that the view to which Dr. Marshall subscribes is largely responsible for the delayed development of this speciality. That dermatology and syphilology should be separate specialties is a view now widely held, not only by specialists in both branches, but by the Ministry of Health, which wishes to develop dermatology and venereology as two separate branches of medicine. They have much in common but it is justly claimed that each will go further unfettered by the other.

The work contains an amazing amount of information in a comparatively small space. But the text is loosely written and clarity is sometimes sacrificed to brevity, so that part of the subject matter is reminiscent of the "Aids" series. The illustrations are prolific and generally very good and in a work of this kind are of immense value.

Treatment recommended for many of the skin conditions is cursory, and little reference is made to recent advances in treatment. For example, the internal treatments of psoriasis, seborrhœic dermatitis, and acne receive only derogatory or casual mention. Antihistamine drugs, liver, vitamins, salicylates, alkalis, and diuretics are of much greater value to the dermatologist

than the text would suggest. For many conditions an appropriate diet is a valuable adjunct to general treatment. The advantage of treating contacts of a scabies patient is not stressed. On the other hand many divergent views are briefly mentioned.

Dr. Marshall states that x rays are much abused in the treatment of skin diseases; it would be fairer to say that many skin diseases are abused by treatment with x rays. The introduction of massive doses of vitamin D₂ for cutaneous tuberculosis is claimed as one of the greatest advances in dermatology; it is often beneficial, but many competent observers would question Dr. Marshall's enthusiasm.

As a result of this brief review of the subject, practitioners are encouraged to "try their hands in the treatment of skin diseases." This is deplorable. Much of the trouble today results from just this inexperienced muddling, and no brief survey such as this manual contains could ever give the harassed practitioner sufficient guide for a rational approach to the subject. It looks easy, but in reality it is difficult even to the expert. Furthermore, this trial-and-error method is not necessary; departments of dermatology are being established in all areas of the country and facilities for diagnosis and advice are becoming available to all practitioners.

It is fair to say that this book is interesting in part, and the early chapters on general diagnosis and symptoms are good. The illustrations and summary descriptions of the diseases will be helpful. It does not, however, compare with Dr. Marshall's former book on the venereal diseases, and it is unlikely to compete successfully with the many good treatises now available. D. E.

Surgical Urology. By G. De Illyes. Formerly Professor of Urology of the Clinic of Urology in the Hungarian Royal Peter Pazmany University, Budapest. 1948. London: Constable. Two volumes, pp. 679, and 243 illustrations. Price 63s. net.

This work, in two volumes, is the result of experience gained by the author in a large department of urology in Budapest. It is well written, contains numerous excellent illustrations, and covers a wide field of urological practice.

As is explained in the preface, negotiations for the publication of the book were started before the outbreak of the war in 1939. The book itself was completed in 1942 but the author was cut off from British and American literature owing to the war. Therefore, one must say that some chapters of the book are entirely out of date and there is no mention of the great advances which have been made in the subject since 1939. For instance, penicillin and the sulphonamides in the treatment of urinary infections, hormone therapy in prostatic carcinoma, retropubic prostatectomy, and complete cystectomy in carcinoma of the bladder are not mentioned or are dismissed in a few words. This is no criticism of the author but must be taken into account in recommending the book to surgeons or students. W. D. D.